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HOLY PROPHET
MUHAMMAD
— AND —
HIS TEACHINGS

A Lecture by
HAZRAT MIRZA BASHIR-UD-DIN
MAHMUD AHMED, KHALIFATUL
MASSIH QADIAN,

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الله اعلم
الحمد لله

WITH THE GRACE & MERCY OF GOD.

HE ALONE IS THE HELPER.

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THE LIFE & TEACHINGS
— OF THE —
HOLY PROPHET

Mr. Chairman, my young English friends, Sisters and Brothers! It has given me very great pleasure that you have afforded me an opportunity this evening of talking to you about the life and teachings of one, whom I love and honour above all mankind, and who is the guide and teacher not only of grown up men but also of little children.

Every man's life presents several aspects, and light may be thrown on it from different points of view. I shall, this evening, deal with that aspect of the Life and Teachings of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) which may prove to be of profit to young people.

Birth and Lineage.

Over $13\frac{1}{2}$ centuries ago, on 20th, April 571, A.D. to be exact, a child was born in Mecca, a town of Arabia, situated about forty miles inland from the shores of the Red Sea. A child, one of thousands that are born into the world every day, but for whom the future held many surprising and wonderful things in store.

The name of this child's mother was Aminah, and the names of his father and grandfather were Abdullah and Abdul Muttalib, respectively. The birth of the child gave rise to conflicting emotions in the hearts of his near ones, emotions both of joy and sorrow. There was joy because there was born to them a child who would continue the line of his forefathers and keep their name alive in the world. There was sorrow, because the child reminded his mother of her loving and most beloved husband and his grandfather of a most obedient son, who had left the world before the birth of his child. His features, his winning smile, the look of wonder in his eyes with which he beheld this strange world into

which he had been so recently ushered, in short, everything connected with him brought back to the bereaved wife and the desolate father the dear memories of the young husband and son who had seven months previously left his dear ones to return to his Maker. Joy, however, predominated over sorrow, for the birth of this child was a guarantee that the name of the deceased would be rescued from oblivion. His grandfather gave to this child, who was born an orphan, the name of Muhammad, and he began to thrive under the care of his mother and of a wet-nurse employed by his uncle.

His Early Upbringing.

It was a custom with the people of Mecca to entrust the care and wet-nursing of their children to women in the country, so that they might have the benefit of the fresh air of the country, and should escape the ill effects of the confined air of the town. Women belonging to villages within 30 or 40 miles of Mecca used to come to the town from time to time and take away newly born babies for nursing, and when they brought

them back, after the period of nursing was over, they used to be adequately rewarded for their care of the children by the parents of the latter. When these women came to Mecca after the birth of Muhammad (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) his mother was also anxious to entrust his care to some country woman, but when a woman was told that the child was an orphan she would refuse to undertake his nursing, being apprehensive that the child's father being dead she would not be adequately rewarded for her care of the child. This orphan child, who was destined to be the Master of Kings and Emperors, was presented to each woman in turn and was by each rejected. Strange, indeed, are the ways of Providence. He had already provided means for comforting the heart of this blessed child's mother, and for his upbringing in the country. Among those who had come to the town on this occasion to take in children for nursing, was one Haleema, who was a poor woman. As Muhammad, the blessed one, was presented to each woman and was rejected by all, so this women went from house to house

seeking a baby to nurse, but was sent away disappointed as she was poor, and nobody wished to entrust the care of their child to poor people. Having been rejected at every door she made up her mind to take away this fatherless child, in order to avoid the taunts of her companions.

When Muhammad had passed the period of nursing, Haleema brought him back to his mother, who took him to her parents at Medina. After a short stay at Medina she was returning with the child to Mecca, when death overtook her and at the age of six, Muhammad (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) was thus deprived of the loving care of his mother. Somebody conveyed him to his grandfather at Mecca, but the latter also died within two years, when Muhammad was only eight years of age, and his care was henceforth undertaken by his uncle Abu Talib. He was thus deprived, one after the other, of the tender care of those who loved him best, till he arrived at years of discretion.

The homes in which his childhood was spent were neither wealthy nor cultivated. For in-

stance, meals were not served in those homes in an orderly and regulated manner. The financial condition and social habits of the people did not encourage the observance of modern table manners. At the time of meals the children gathered round the mother and clamoured for food, and each made an attempt to appropriate to him or herself a larger share than the others were able to secure. Abu Talib's maid, however, relates that Muhammad never followed this habit. While the other children were engaged in their unseemly contest over the food, he would sit silently apart, waiting for his aunt to give him his food, and whatever he was given he ate with pleasure.

His Humanity.

At the age of twenty he joined a society whose members were required to take a vow, that they would, whenever called upon, help those who were oppressed, whatever tribe they might belong to and secure to them the enjoyment of their proper rights. So that, even in his early youth whenever he learnt that one man

was being oppressed by another, he would espouse the cause of the former and was not satisfied till he had secured for him his just rights.

His Marriage with Khadeeja.

His truthfulness, honesty and goodness at this time of his life earned for him the titles of "The Truthful One," and, "The Trusted One" When the purity and honesty of his life began to be generally known, he was engaged by a wealthy lady merchant of Mecca, whose name was Khadeeja, to undertake on her behalf a commercial venture into Syria, in return for a share in the profits of the venture. She also sent a slave of her own to accompany him. Muhammad executed his commission with such diligence and honesty, that the venture resulted in a far larger profit than Khadeeja had expected. His kindness and courtesy won the heart of Khadeeja's slave, and on returning to Mecca he gave a full account of the purity and nobility of Muhammad's life to Khadeeja, who was so affected by the recital that she offered her hand in marriage to

Muhammad and was accepted by him. At this time Khadeeja (may God be pleased with her!) was forty years of age, and Muhammad (on whom be peace and the blessings of God!) was only twenty-five.

Emancipation of Slaves.

The first act of Khadeeja, after her marriage with Muhammad, was that she put the whole of her wealth, including her slaves at the disposal of Muhammad, who immediately set all the slaves at liberty, and thus accomplished that in his youth which aged leaders had been unable to accomplish during long life-times viz., to strike a fatal blow at the root of slavery, in a town where the institution of slavery was the foundation of the entire social fabric and was indispensable to its working.

His life of retirement and contemplation.

A contemplation of the ills that affected his country made him sad, and he was wont to retire to a cave at the top of a mountain called Hira, three miles from Mecca, where he used to ponder over the condition of his country and the

prevalence of polytheism and devoted himself to the worship of the One Eternal God. He found such comfort in the latter occupation, that he often carried with him provisions sufficient to sustain him over several days, and spent long periods of time in the cave in the worship and contemplation of the Almighty.

The First Revelation.

At last when he arrived in the fortieth year he received Divine revelation to following effect :—

“Worship God and pray to Him for spiritual and intellectual advancement and for the acquisition of such learning as has not previously been revealed to mankind.”

When he received this revelation he felt troubled and proceeded home and related the whole incident to his wife, at the same time expressing his fear that God meant to try him. Khadeeja, who used to study every movement of his with affectionate solicitude, comforted him and said, “Nay, God will surely not try thee,

for thou dost behave kindly towards thy relatives, dost assist the helpless, dost exhibit the most excellent moral qualities, dost entertain thy guests hospitably and dost help those who have been overtaken by misfortune." This was the testimony of the woman who was his wife and was, therefore, familiar with the minutest details of his life. There could be no better or truer witness of his character. For, the real nature of a man can be judged only by experience, and nobody can have greater experience of the nature of a man than his own wife.

Muhammad was not, however, wholly comforted by what his wife had said, and she, therefore, suggested that he should go to her cousin, who was a Biblical scholar and should enquire from him the significance of this revelation.

Accordingly, he went to Warka bin Naufal, who was his wife's cousin, and told him of his experience. Warka replied "Be not troubled. Thou hast received revelation from God in the same manner in which Moses used to receive it," and added, "I grieve over my old age, I wish

I were younger and could witness the day when God will appoint thee for the guidance of mankind. I am afraid thy people will drive thee forth from thy home." Muhammad, who used to spend every hour of his life thinking over the welfare of his people and of mankind, and who was extremely popular with his townsmen, was surprised to hear this and exclaimed in wonder "Will my people indeed drive me forth"? Warka replied, "That they surely will. No man has ever been entrusted with, a message so vital as thou hast been entrusted with, but his people have oppressed and persecuted him." In view of the love which he bore to his people, the affection which he displayed towards everyone of his townsmen and the services which he rendered to the poor, the intelligence that he would be driven forth by his people came as a surprise to him. But the future held greater surprises in store for him.

His Call.

Within a few months of this incident, he again received a revelation in which he was

commanded to call mankind to God, to abolish all forms of polytheism, to suppress evil and transgression, and to establish purity and righteousness in the world. This revelation conferred on him the rank of prophet, and in him was thus fulfilled the prophecy contained in Deuteronomy XVIII-18, where it is written "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee." Muhammad (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) was a descendant of Ishmael, and was thus a cousin of the Israelites, and he was, like Moses, the bearer of a New Law. The moment he was raised to prophethood, however, the whole world changed for him. Those that had loved him previously now hated him, those that had praised him now disparaged him, and those that had previously comforted him began now to persecute him.

Abu Bakr Joins Him.

But four person who had opportunities of coming into the closest contact with him believed in him. These were Khadeeja, his wife, Ali the son of Abu Talib his cousin, Zaid his freedman, and Abu

Bakr his dearest friend, and the ground of their belief was that Muhammad could not possibly be an impostor. The manner in which Abu Bakr signified his acceptance of Muhammad as a prophet was significant. When the latter received the revelation commanding him to proclaim his prophetic mission, Abu Bakr was sitting in the house of a nobleman of Mecca. A maid came into the room and exclaimed, "I wonder what is the matter with Khadeeja to-day. She says her husband is a prophet as Moses was a prophet." At this those present began to laugh and described such a claim as the result of madness. Abu Bakr, however, who knew Muhammad intimately, immediately left the place and proceeding to the latter's house enquired whether he had put forward any claim, Muhammad replied that God had appointed him for the guidance of mankind and for establishing the Unity of God. On hearing this and without asking any further questions Abu Bakr exclaimed :—

" I swear by my father and my mother that thou hast never uttered a falsehood, and I cannot

conceive that thou wouldst say that concerning God which is not true. I bear witness, therefore, that there is no God besides Allah, and that thou art the Messenger of God."

Thereafter Abu Bakr began to exhort several young men who respected him for the purity of his life, and presently seven of these young men accepted Muhammad (on whom be peace and the blessings of God).

Persecution.

It is not an easy thing to accept the truth. The people of Mecca whose principal means of livelihood was the guardianship and service of idol temples, could not be expected to tolerate the doctrine that there were none worthy of worship except God. As soon as the relatives of those who had become Muslims became aware of the fact they began to persecute them. Usman's uncle secured his body with a rope and confined him to a room in the house, declaring that he would not release him till he had repented of his new faith. Another young Muslim, Zubair, who was only fifteen years of age, was also imprison-

ed by his relatives and the latter used to fill the chamber in which Zubair was confined with smoke, in order to make him recant, but he remained firm and did not cease to profess his faith. A new form of persecution was invented by the mother of another young Muslim. She refused to take any food till he reverted to the faith of his ancestors. He replied that he was willing to obey his parents in all temporal matters, but that he could not obey them contrary to the pleasure of God, as the allegiance which he owed to God was higher than that which he owed to his parents.

In short, with the exception of Abu Bakr and Khadeeja, those who believed in the Holy Prophet, in the beginning, were all young men between fifteen and twenty-five years of age. It may be said that Muhammad, being an orphan, had from an early age learnt to carve out his own path, and that when God raised him to prophethood, the first who gathered round him were young people. With reference to its early history, therefore, Islam may be described as the religion of the young.

His Manner of Approach.

As a prophet is bound to convey his message generally to those for whom it is meant, Muhammad adopted the following mode for this purpose. One day he took his stand on a rising piece of ground and started calling upon the principal houses in Mecca. As the people reposed great trust and confidence in him they began to gather round him in answer to his call, and those who could not come themselves sent representatives to listen to what he had to say. "Ye people of Mecca, if I were to tell you that a great army is advancing upon Mecca and has arrived close to it, intending to attack it, would you believe me"? Now, this was apparently impossible, for Mecca was regarded as a sacred town by the Arabs, and it could not be conceived that any tribe would march against it. Besides, the Meccan shepherds used to graze their flocks all round Mecca for long distances, and in the event of an army advancing towards Mecca they would speedily have warned the people of Mecca of the danger. Yet the answer which they all

made to Muhammad's question on this occasion was, "We would believe thee, for thou hast never been guilty of a falsehood." To this the Holy Prophet rejoined, "You testifying that I never speak that which is not true. I inform you, therefore, that God has appointed me to deliver His message to you, and to point out to you the error of your ways." The moment the people heard this they ran away from him, and exclaimed that the man was either mad or an imposter.

III treatment of His followers.

This incident created a sensation in Mecca, and those who had already believed in him were subjected to severer persecutions than before. Brothers were deserted by brothers, children were driven out by their parents, and slaves were tortured by their master. Persecution assumed several forms. Young men who cared little for customs and traditions and judged religious questions by the test of reason, and, therefore were quick to accept the truth of the Holy Prophet, were imprisoned and starved by

their parents in the hope that they might renounce their faith. Such measures, however, failed to shake them, and they continued to worship their Maker with dry lips and sunken eyes, till their parents, fearing that they might be starved to death, supplied them with food. Pity was sometimes taken upon these young men, but the case of those slaves and poor people who had become Muslims, but who had nobody to protect or to help them was indeed pitiful. Slaves were made to wear steel armour and then stand in the burning sun of Arabia till their skins were scorched. Some were dragged along the burning sands by means of ropes tied to their legs, the bodies of others were seared with red hot irons. One form of torture was to puncture the bodies of Muslims with needles. A devout Muslim lady was killed by a spear being run through her body. But these and other unspeakable horrors were borne unflinchingly by the Muslims, and even under torture they did not cease to declare that they could not relinquish the worship of One God. The Holy Prophet himself was the victim of persecution, but in his

case, the conduct of his enemies, was influenced by unwillingness to give offence to his family which was universally respected in Mecca. Nevertheless, he was often abused and ashes and rubbish were thrown upon him when he used to be prostrate in prayer. Once when he was in this position, an enemy of his, placed his foot upon him neck, and kept him pinned in that position for a long time. On one occasion when he went to the Mosque for prayers, a cloth was put round his neck, and an attempt was made to strangle him by twisting the cloth,

His Teachings.

In spite of all this opposition the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) continued his propoganda. Wherever he found a few men sitting together he would go and teach them that God was One, that there was no other God besides Him, neither in Heaven nor on Earth; that he had neither son nor daughter; He begat not, nor was He begotten; that they should put their faith in Him and worship Him and pray to Him alone; that He

was free from all grossness and, therefore, could not be perceived by our physical eyes; that He was the Master of all Powers who had created the Universe and that the soul of the dead returned to Him and were given new life; men should Love him and strive to attain nearness to Him; that they should purify their hearts, tongues and their actions, that they should eschew falsehood, murder, disturbance, theft, robbery, false charge, fault finding, abuse, transgression and envy, that they should not spend their time in the pursuit of luxury and the satisfaction of their desires but should devote themselves to the service and welfare of mankind, and should promote love and peace in the world.

Pagan beliefs of His Countrymen.

This is what he taught, and yet the people laughed at time. The people of Mecca were confirmed idol-worshippers and their temple contained hundreds of idols whom they daily worshipped, and before whom men made offerings, which were the means of support of many respectable families. To them the doctrine of

the worship of One God alone appeared fantastic. They could not understand why God could not incarnate Himself in man or an idol. They could not reconcile themselves to the idea of an Invisible God. Therefore they were wont to laugh at the Holy Prophet whenever they saw him, and exclaimed, "Behold, this man has combined all the Gods into One," for they imagined that the separate existence of many gods was an incontrovertible fact, and that when Muhammad taught that there was only One God, he meant that he had combined all the Gods into One. They ascribed their own fantastic notions to the Holy Prophet, and then laughed at their absurdity. The doctrine of a life after death furnished them with another source of merriment. They were amused at the idea that the dead would be made to live again.

Refugees to Abyssinia.

When the persecution of the Muslims at Mecca became unbearable, the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) permitted his companions to take refuge in Abyssinia.

nia, which was even then ruled by a Christian King. The majority of Muslim men and women therefore, left their homes in Mecca and proceeded to Abyssinia. The hostility of the Meccans, however, persued them thither, and the latter sent a deputation to the King of Abyssinia that he should hand over the fugitives to the Meccans. But this Christian King was a monarch who loved to be just. When he had heard the deputation he desired to hear the other side and the Muslims were commanded to appear before him. It was a pathetic scene. The Muslims who had been compelled to leave their homes as the result of persecution by their own compatriots, appeared before the King of Abyssinia, apprehensive that they would be handed over to the Meccans and would be subjected by them to tortures severer than those which they had experienced before. Then King enquired from them why they had come to his country. Their spokesman replied :—“ Sir, we were ignorant and had no knowledge of good or evil. We worshipped idols and were unaware of the Unity of God. All manner of evil was prevalent among us ;

transgression, robbery, murder and fornication were not counted as faults. God then raised Muhammad (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) as a prophet among us. He taught us the worship of the One God, restrained us from evil doing, enjoined justness and fairness, exhorted us to love each other and guided us along the path of purity and righteousness. Thereupon our brethren began to persecute us and inflicted various tortures upon us, till we were compelled to leave our homes and take refuge in your country. These people have followed us here and demand our return. Our only fault is that we worship the One Eternal God." The King was so affected by this reply that he refused to hand over the Muslims to the Meccans. The latter then intrigued with the Court nobles and next day reiterated their demand, stating that the Muslims were in the habit of abusing Jesus. The King again summoned the Muslims and they explained to him what Islam taught concerning Jesus, viz., that he was a beloved servant of God and a prophet, but that they would not accept him as God, as God was only

One. At this the nobles were excited and demanded that the King should punish the Muslims. The King, however, replied that his own belief concerning Jesus was the same as that held by the Muslims, and he could not, on account of that belief, hand them over to their oppressors. He told the nobles that he did not mind their resentment as he preferred the pleasure of God, to the sovereignty of his Country.

Hard Times at Mecca.

In Mecca, the persecution of the Holy Prophet himself was increasing. The Meccans approached his uncle Abu Talib, who was one of the chiefs of his people and fear of whom restrained them from proceeding to extremes against the Holy Prophet, and suggested that he should adopt the son of some other chief, and should hand over Muhammad to their vengeance. Said Abu Talib "This is indeed a strange request. You wish me to hand over my property to one of your brats, and to hand over my nephew to be tortured to death by you. Would even an animal kill its own young and love those

of another?" Disappointed in this, they asked him to restrain his nephew from preaching the Unity of God and the iniquity of Idol-worship. Thereupon Abu Talib sent for Muhammad and asked him whether he could not please the chief men of Mecca by conforming to their wishes. He replied "Uncle, I owe you a deep debt of gratitude, but even for your sake I cannot forsake God. If you are afraid of the hostility of the people you may leave me to myself, but I must preach the Truth which God has revealed to me. I cannot sit silent and witness the ruin of my people."

The Tempting Offers.

The Meccans next resorted to cajolery and entreaty. They deputed a chief to approach the Holy Prophet and to request him not to disturb the peace of the town, suggesting at the same time that if his object was to gain honor, they were willing to acclaim him as the most honored citizen of Mecca; if he desired wealth they were ready to make him the wealthiest citizen of Mecca by making up a large contribution for

him ; if he sought to set himself up as a King they were willing to recognise him as such ; if he desired a wife he would be given the choice of all the women of Mecca ; but that he should desist from preaching the Unity of God. Hearing this, the Holy Prophet replied " If you set the Sun on my right hand and the moon on my left, I shall not renounce this doctrine." Eighty men had so far joined the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of God).

Blockade and Boycott.

When, however, the rumours of the doings at Mecca spread into the country, people began to arrive in Mecca to find out for themselves what all this meant. The Meccans were chagrined at this and the streets were picketed to prevent anybody from seeing the Holy Prophet. At the same time they resolved to put an end to his life. Learning this, his uncle and his other relatives withdrew with him into a neighbouring valley in order the better to be able to protect him.

Frustrated in their designs, the Meccans entered into a covenant to boycott the Holy

Prophet, the members of his family and all the Muslims. People were forbidden to sell articles of food or clothing to them; and intermarriages and every other kind of intercourse with them was prohibited, unless they agreed to hand over the Holy Prophet to the Meccans to be dealt with by the latter as they pleased. Mecca is a lonely town in the desert. There is no other town within forty miles of it. It, may, therefore, be imagined what hardships the Muslims and the relatives of the Holy Prophet had to undergo as the result of this boycott. Pickets were posted to prevent any person from supplying them with food or drink, and this state of affairs lasted for three years. The beleaguered had to watch for favourable opportunities at night to bring in provisions, which were very often completely exhausted, and they had to subsist for days on the leaves and barks of trees. A companion of the Holy Prophet relates that the Muslims looked haggard and emaciated and their health began to suffer. Not for days or for weeks, but for 3 whole years was this greatest benefactor of humanity persecuted in this manner

for preaching the worship of One God and the acquisition of high moral qualities, but neither his own sufferings nor those of his followers and dear ones interfered with his high and noble purpose. After three years of continuous persecution the tardy humanity of some of the Meccan chiefs rebelled against this tyranny, and they tore up the covenant into which they had entered. The Holy Prophet and his companions then left the valley into which they had withdrawn, but his old uncle and his faithful wife could not escape the effects of this long period of persecution, and died shortly after.

His Journey to Taif.

Perceiving the hostility of the Meccans towards his teachings, the Holy Prophet (on whom the peace and the blessings of God) thought of addressing himself to other towns of Arabia, and journeyed to Taif to call its people to the worship of One God. Taif is an old town sixty miles distant from Mecca. When the word of God was preached to the people of this town, they proved more savage than the people of Mecca.

At first they abused him and then drove him out of the town, and set dogs and ruffians at his heels. He was pelted with stones from all directions and walked along bathed in his own blood and followed by ferocious dogs. His attitude towards the tyrants of Taif might, however, be judged from the words which issued from his lips under these conditions. He walked on wiping the blood from his face and prayed in these words, " Lord, these people know not that what I tell them is the truth ; they are doing this because they think it is right. Be not angry with them, therefore, and send not down punishment upon them, but open their eyes to the Truth and enable them to accept it," What brutal torture repaid by such sentiments of love ! Do we anywhere meet with an instance of such consummate love for humanity ?

Spread of Islam to Medina.

The Truth cannot be suppressed, and versions of his teachings began to spread into the country. Some men of Yathrab (which is now known as Medina) came to Mecca on the occasion of the

annual pilgrimage, and met the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of God). He explained the teachings of Islam to them and they were deeply affected by it. On returning to Yathrab they spoke of it to their fellow townsmen and next year seventy of them came to learn further particulars and all accepted Islam. They requested the Holy Prophet that he should accompany them to their town and make it his home. He considered that the time had not yet arrived for his leaving Mecca, but he promised them that when the occasion arose he would come to Medina.

His Flight to Medina.

When the Meccans learnt that his doctrine was beginning to spread outside Mecca, they hit upon a novel plan of putting an end to his life. They selected one man from each tribe to make a united assault upon him during the night and to finish him, thus making all tribes responsible for the outrage, so that the clan of the Holy Prophet, even if they resented it, should feel themselves helpless against the united tribes of

Mecca. The Holy Prophet had however, been warned of the danger by God, and he left Mecca the same night in the company of Abu Bakr, and journeyed to Medina. The people of Medina readily accepted his doctrine and within a short time almost all of them became Muslims. They chose the Holy Prophet as their King, and thus the corner 'stone which the builders' of his town 'had rejected' became the crown of the State of Medina.

Elected King of Medina.

At King of Medina also, his occupation was the teaching and instruction of the people, and he never gave up his simple mode of life. He spent his time in calling men to the worship of One God, and teaching them the moral and social ordinances of Islam. He personally led the five daily prayers in the Mosque, settled all disputes that arose among the members of the community, and devoted time and attention to the promotion of the national welfare, for instance, in matters relating to commerce, education and hygiene, He paid special attention to

the circumstances and needs of the poor, and strove to fulfil the latter. For instance, he would sometimes run errands for the poor who stood in need of such service. During his many occupations he yet found time to join in the games and pastimes of the young and encouraged in them the development of a healthy national spirit. When he returned to his home he often assisted his wives in household work. At midnight when everybody had retired to rest, he would leave his bed and spend the still and dark hours in the worship of His Maker, till sometimes his feet were swollen as the result of standing in an attitude of devotion.

His teaching may briefly be described as follows :—

His God Idea.

1. He taught that God is One, and all other beings, whether angels or men, are His creatures; and that it is offering an insult to God to imagine that He incarnates himself in man or in idols, or that he begets or is begotten. He is above all such contingence . He alone gives

life and He alone takes it away. All reformers and prophets were His servants, and none of them possessed Divine powers. All men should worship Him alone, and should pray to Him alone, and should put their trust in Him alone.

Object of man's Creation.

2. He taught that God had created man for the highest spiritual, moral, intellectual and social advancement, and that in order to fulfil this object He has constantly raised prophets among all nations. He repudiated the doctrine that prophethood had been confined to any particular nation, for this would involve a charge of partiality against the Creator and would amount to a denial of His Providence. He testified to the truth of the Prophets of all nations.

Revelation.

3. He taught that the Word of God had been revealed in all ages according to the respective needs of the times, and he claimed that God had appointed him for the guidance of this last age. Accordingly, he taught that the

Quran was a more perfect code of laws than the previously revealed books and he called all mankind to it.

The Eternal Word.

4. He taught that God always speaks to His Servants and reveals signs in their support. to assure them of His Existence and of His Love, and he claimed that those who followed his teachings would perceive the truth of these things within themselves. I can vouch for the truth of this doctrine on the basis of my personal experience. I have, by following the teachings of Islam, heard the Word of God in the same manner in which the people of the time of Moses and Jesus heard it, and God has on several occasions manifested to me signs which are surely beyond the power of man.

A Living Religion.

5. He taught that one of the signs of a true religion was that God should provide means for keeping it alive and pure in the world, and that, in order to secure Islam against human interference He would raise prophets who would guard

Islam and preserve its purity. Accordingly, a prophet has recently appeared in India to fulfil this object. The name of that Prophet is Ahmad. I am his second successor and my companions are some of his followers.

Life of Peace.

6. He taught that in spite of differences of religion, people ought to live in peace and amity with each other and should not quarrel over religion matters. For if a man has the Truth he need not quarrel over it, he has but to present it and it will of itself conquer the hearts of the people. He, therefore, permitted even Christians to conduct their service in his Mosque an instance of large-hearted tolerance which is hardly to be met with even in this advanced twentieth century.

Interdependence of Spiritual & Physical.

7. He emphasised that man's life has two aspects, the spiritual aspect and the physical aspect, and that they were so related to each other that they could not be separated from each other, and that each of them re-acts upon the other. He laid special stress upon the truth that

no amount of outward conformity to religious injunctions could avail in the absence of the purity of the heart, and that, on the other hand, the mind could not be trained and developed without the help of outward conformity. For a perfect development of man, therefore, it is necessary that regard must be had for both these aspects.

Morality.

8. In respect of morals, he taught that all men are born with pure and untainted natures and whatever corruption appears can be directly attributed to faulty education or wrong upbringing. That is why he always insisted on high education and high upbringing.

Self Purification.

9. He used to emphasise the fact too, that the real object of good morals is the true transformation of one's self as well as the others. Therefore true morals are those which help in purifying ourselves as well as others. He would not stress one aspect of a question alone, he would keep in view all sides of thing. He

would never say for instance that one should make use of mercy and forgiveness on every occasion. He would say in effect that if one was harmed or injured by another, one should think how best one could improve the character of the harmer or injurer. If he happens to be a noble minded person, he would certainly mend in future if he was given an opportunity to do so. So he would say such a person deserves every consideration of Mercy and Forgiveness. But if he happens to be 'so degraded as to mis-interpret your 'forgiving him' as a sign of weakness or fear and thus become bolder and more impudent in his wickedness, then it is time that strict measures were adopted or else he would harm others beside yourself. Punish him, according to the measure of his guilt, or else innocent and weak people would suffer for no fault of their own.

His Teachings as to wars.

10. He taught that offensive wars should never be undertaken. War was permitted only as a defensive measure. Even in the latter case if the aggressing party repents of its folly, and

is willing to come o terms, you hould be eady to enter into peace

Spirit Created thongh eternal.

11. Again he taught that the spirit or soul of a man is created immortal; therefore with the death of the body there is no death to it. It would continue making progress without undergoing any annihilation. So much so, that even sinners and the iniquitous after undergoing purificatory chastisement and after they are purged of all evil inclinations, will share the eternal Mercy of Allah and they will be placed on the road of eternal progress again.

The Meccan Hostility.

When the Meccans saw that he had secured a good opportunity of spreading his teachings among the inhabitants of Medina, and many people had begun to join his fold, they led many expeditions against him, but all these military attempts failed. Even here his superiority over them was clearly demonstrated for, in spite of the heavy preparations on their part and the odds being in their favour-so netimes they num-

bered thrice as many as the Moslems-they were always defeated, which was very unusual. The Moslems were victorious and the Meccans were helplessly discomfited. Sometimes the Moslems did suffer some sort of check or repulse, but it was never a defect in the real sense of the word, for ultimately it led to an overwhelming defeat of the enemy.

These campaigns on the part of the enemy led to very clear and direct results. One was that out of all this turmoil he emerged the supreme King of Arabia. Secondly he had occasion during this time of strife and stress to exhibit some of those high moral traits which could but only be shown during war and fight. This established his moral superiority still further. At the same time this stress and strife proved to the world what a spirit of sacrifice and devotion he had infused into his followers.

The Ohud Episode, & the Loyalty of His following.

For the sake of illustration I relate here an episode of the battle of Ohud. Three years after

his emigration of Mecca the enemy with three thousand veterans set out of Mecca to attack Medina. Medina is two hundred miles away from Mecca, but the enemy were so confident of their success that they advanced into the very neighbourhood of Medina. At Ohud which is only eight miles away from Medina the Holy Prophet marched out with One thousand men to meet them. One of his bands misunderstood his directions and the result was that victory which was almost theirs was turned into a defeat. In spite of the fact that the Moslems were victorious on all the fronts; yet owing to that tactical blunder, the enemy turned upon them and during the course of the battle at one time the situation developed so critical that the Moslems were driven for behind, so far indeed, that the Holy Prophet was left alone in the circle of his bitterest foes. At this moment he stood so firm, though his men had fallen back he would not return a single step. When the Moslems realised this state of affairs, they made a determined effort to come to his succour, but only 14 of them

could break through the enemy's lines to him. At that time the Holy Prophet was struck with a stone and he received a wound in the head and fell down in a swoon. He was buried under the dead bodies of the Moslems who fell defending him. It was generally thought that the Holy Prophet had received his martyrdom. His followers were like so many lovers when they heard the news, many of them threw down their arms in the field of battle and began to cry. One of the Moslem soldiers who was not aware of the rumour and happened to pass by and enquired the cause of this despair. When informed of the reported death of the Holy Prophet the soldier remarked, that now was the time for a more desperate fight. We shall follow our beloved leader to death. Having said this he drew his sword and fell upon the enemy and was killed, Seventy wounds were found on his body when it was discovered later on.

When the body of the Holy Prophet has discovered under the dead bodies of his followers, it was found that he was alive. The news spread

and the Moslem army began to rally again and the enemy was routed. A Moslem soldier missed one of his relatives, so he went out in search of him. He found him severely wounded and almost at his last breath. As soon as the wounded man saw his friend, he enquired of him of the welfare of the Holy Prophet and when he was told that the Holy Prophet was safe, his face beamed with delight and he said, "Now I die happy." Then the dying man caught hold of his relative's hand and requested him to convey the following message to his dear and near ones: "Muhammad the Prophet of God is a charge in our hands for which we are answerable to God. It is your duty to protect this divine charge. Take heed lest you should fall short of your duty." This is how the Muslim men evinced their faithfulness towards the Holy Prophet. The Muslim ladies were in no way behind their men in this respect. When the news reached Medina that the Holy Prophet was killed, the Medinites to the last soul left the City for the battlefield with hearts full of grief and sorrow. They were met by the Muslim Army which was

returning from the battlefield delighted with the Prophet safe among them. A woman went forward and asked one of the soldiers "How is the Holy Prophet." As the man knew that the Holy Prophet was quite safe, he did not care to answer her question and said "your father is killed, Madam." "How is the Prophet of God." she said with impatience, "I do not enquire of you about the death of my father." Again the man did not care to set her anxiety about the prophet at rest and replied "Your two brothers are killed, dear Sister" she lost her patience and said with sternness, "I do not ask you to tell me anything about the fate of my brothers." "Would you or would you not let me know how is the Prophet of God?" "The Holy Prophet is quite safe" replied the man. "God be praised" she exclaimed, "if the Prophet of God lives, then the whole world lives, and I do not care who else dies." How could such sincere devotion and genuine attachment for the person of the Holy Prophet could exist in the hearts of his followers without a pure and perfect example and a keen

solicitude for the welfare of mankind on his part.

The Honain Episode and the Prophetic Charge.

Similarly the Muslim army was once marching through a mountain pass on both sides of which the archers of the enemy lay concealed. The Muslims were quite aware of the position of the enemy began to throw arrows at them. This sudden onslaught frightened the horses and the camels of the Muslims and the riders lost control over them. The Holy Prophet was left with only 16 companions amidst a host of 4000 archers and the rest of the Muslim army was dispersed. The Holy Prophet quite undaunted advanced his horse towards the enemy's ranks. Seeing this the handful of companions that were with him were disconcerted and dismounting from their horses, held the reins of his horse and said" The enemy is advancing triumphantly and the Muslim Army has been routed and the safety of Islam depends on your safety; please go back so that the scattered Muslims should come together" "Leave off the reins of

my horse " said the prophet, and then he exclaimed at the top of his voice " I am the prophet of God, I am not a liar, let him who can, injure me," Saying these words he advanced towards the ranks of the enemy with the 16 companions left with him. No human hand could do him any harm. Then the Prophet ordered one of his followers to call the flying Muslim with a loud voice in these words " Ye Medinites, the prophet of God calls you." A companion of the Holy Prophet relates " Our horses and camels had become terribly frightened and were running away from the field of battle and all our efforts to restrain them and turn back were of no avail " When we heard this call we became as if we were dead and the voice of God was calling us. I became impatient to run back. I tried to turn my camel back too but to no purpose. The voice, " The Prophet of God calls you," was still resounding in my ears. When I saw that my camel was carrying me away from the scene of battle I took my sword out of its scabbard, killed him, and like a madman ran towards the place from which the

voice came." He writes, such was the state of all the army. He who could turn his horse or camel came back to him and he who could not do so got down off it and ran towards him. He who could not even get down killed his animal and hastened towards his master and in a few minutes every one gathered round him at his call just at the dead are said to rise up from the grave at the sound of the trumpet of Israfil.

His Humane Statutes.

He always laid emphasis on the point that Muslims should never be the first to attack; they should on the other hand fight only for defence. He always enjoined upon his followers never to kill in battle women, children, clergymen old men and those who were unfit for war. He taught that those who lay down their arms should not be killed. Trees should not be cut down, buildings should not be demolished, towns and valleys should not be ravaged, and if he ever came to know that these instructions were violated he was very much displeased and became angry with the man who did so.

His Generous Treatment of the Meccans.

When Allah vouchsafed to him the conquest of Mecca the people thereof were trembling with fear at the treatment which might be meted out to them. The residence of the Medina who had not themselves seen the tortures to which the Muslims had been subjected and had only heard of them from other people were very much enraged at the thought of them. But when he entered Mecca he gathered together the people and said "O ye people I forgive today all the wrongs which you have done to me ; ye shall not be punished. If there had been no wars and he had not been made a King how could he become a perfect model for mankind and how could he display this aspect of human morals.

His Time Nature.

In short the wars have discovered an important aspect of his morals and demonstrated his love for peace, tranquility, forgiveness and mercy ; because he alone is truly merciful who has the power to show mercy and he shows it,

and he alone is worthy to be called generous who possess riches and distributes them. The almighty God granted him victory over his tyrant enemies and he forgave them all, He grants him kingdom and by his living a humble and simple life and by his distributing the riches to the poor and the needy he proved that he did not teach others to look after the poor because he did not possess anything but that he acted upon what he taught. He spent every moment of his life in suffering for the sake of God, and every day suffered a new death in His path, He died at the age of 63, and even in his last illness he was anxious to safeguard his followers against reversion to any forms of associating other being with God. He repeatedly exclaimed 'May God deal with those who turned to the tombs of their prophets into places of worship.' meaning that those people pray to their prophets as if the latter possessed Divine powers. He thus meant to warn the Muslims against this form of deification. Condemning with his last breath all that might militate against the Perfect Unity of God, he returned to his Maker, and although it is said that the Muslims worship Muhammad (on whom be peace and the blessings of God), he was the man who did more than anybody else to suppress all forms of deification and association of other beings with God. He spent the whole of his life in preaching the Perfect Unity of God, and whatever love we find today in the world for this doctrine it is the result of his efforts and the efforts of those who followed him.

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KITAB GHAR, QADIAN.